

VZCZCXRO8877  
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH  
DE RUEHKO #3929/01 2360824  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 240824Z AUG 07  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6879  
INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEAWJA/USDOJ WASHDC PRIORITY  
RULSDMK/USDOT WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J5//  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHHMHBA/COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI  
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CC/PA//  
RUALSFJ/COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA//J5/JO21//  
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA  
RUAYJAA/CTF 72  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 5202  
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 2771  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 6392  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1793  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 3519  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 8584  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4648  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 5593

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 11 TOKYO 003929

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR E, P, EB, EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA;  
WHITE HOUSE/NSC/NEC; JUSTICE FOR STU CHEMTOB IN ANTI-TRUST DIVISION;  
TREASURY/OASIA/IMI/JAPAN; DEPT PASS USTR/PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;  
SECDEF FOR JCS-J-5/JAPAN,  
DASD/ISA/EAPR/JAPAN; DEPT PASS ELECTRONICALLY TO USDA  
FAS/ITP FOR SCHROETER; PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR;  
CINCPAC FLT/PA/ COMNAVFORJAPAN/PA.

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 08/24/07

Index:

- (1) What economic strategy will Japan take in APEC summit?
- (2) Ronten (point at issue) -- WTO trade talks: WTO is a lifeline for Japanese economy
- (3) Daring prediction - 2007 reversal of power in Upper House (4): Diplomacy, security policy
- (4) DPJ in action (Part 1): Ozawa determined to bring about change of government in straightforward manner, sealing off option of political realignment plan
- (5) Koichi Kato, former LDP secretary general, says Abe's decision to stay in office without public support creates political vacuum
- (6) Facts about civilian control (Section 4): Thinking of SDF as Japan's new garrison-SDF in transformation (Part 2): Backing to US military called assistance with Iraqi reconstruction

ARTICLES:

- (1) What economic strategy will Japan take in APEC summit?

SANKEI (Page 13) (Full)  
August 24, 2007

The annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

will be held in Sydney, Australia, in early September, in which Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will also participate. Excluding the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Regional Forum (ARF), in which security issues are exclusively discussed, APEC is the sole arena for discussion in the region. APEC also brings together the United States and China, both of which have influence over the economies in the region. Attention is now being focused on what economic strategy Japan, which ranks with these two powers, will take in the APEC summit.

APEC was launched in 1989 at the proposal of Australia, with 12 members - Japan, the US, Canada, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the six ASEAN member countries (at that time).

APEC declared that it would liberalize trade and investment in the region and contribute to world economic growth, instead of aiming at forming a closed trade bloc of its member countries. The forum also aimed to maintain and further develop the current multinational free trade system under the World Trade Organization for areas outside the region, in a bid to create an open economic zone.

APEC is now composed of 21 countries and regions. China joined in 1991, and Russia and Vietnam were also added in 1998, though they were socialist countries. Its members' combined gross domestic product (GDP) accounts for 60 PERCENT of the entire world's. Its population makes up 40 PERCENT of that of the whole world. As it stands, APEC has grown into a giant economic zone.

Its members are called not "states" but "economies." Taiwan and Hong Kong are members of APEC, showing its nature of placing emphasis on economic affairs, unlike other international forums.

Initially, the forum called only ministerial meetings, but a summit

TOKYO 00003929 002 OF 011

was held in 1993 for the first time at the proposal of US President Clinton. Since then, APEC has held a summit and a ministerial meeting every fall.

The Bogor Declaration in 1994 set the goal of completely liberalizing trade and investment in the region by 2010 for industrialized countries and by 2020 for developing countries. However, countries have begun to pour their efforts into negotiations on concluding bilateral free trade agreements (FTA) on the heels of changes in the economic situation and have eventually become less interested in the goal of pursuing trade liberalization among the APEC members.

The US has advocated a concept of forming an APEC-wide Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP), but it is quite difficult to realize a free trade zone based on common rules in the Asia-Pacific region, which is featured by diversification. China, which has been stepping up efforts to conclude FTAs with ASEAN countries, proposed an economic-zone initiative involving the 10 ASEAN countries plus three (Japan, China, and South Korea), apparently showing its eagerness to take the initiative in managing the Asian economy while excluding the US from the framework.

APEC has proposed promoting multilateral trade liberalization, centering on WTO negotiations. On this challenge, too, it is now unlikely to see a settlement of the Doha Round of global trade talks under the WTO by the end of this year. APEC was launched, with economic issues as its main theme, but no conspicuous achievements have been produced in the economic area. In recent meetings of APEC, North Korea and security issues have been taken up as major themes, and its weakening identity is being pointed out.

How will Prime Minister Abe be involved in the US-proposed FTAAP concept, in order to hold in check moves by China, with which Japan is struggling for leadership in negotiations on future options for the ASEAN plus three and the East Asia summit? Attention is being focused on what economic strategy the prime minister will take. The issue of global warming, which will be high on the agenda for the Lake Toya Summit next year, is also expected to take center stage in the APEC summit. Another focus is on what views on the issue of global warming will be compiled under the framework of APEC summit

joined by the US and China - two major greenhouse gas emitters.

(2) Ronten (point at issue) -- WTO trade talks: WTO is a lifeline for Japanese economy

MAINICHI (Page 8) (Full)  
August 24, 2007

Akira Kotera, professor of international economic law at University of Tokyo

Japan needs to prepare an environment for developing countries to be able to act in concert as agreement is expected to be reached even in the area of agricultural goods.

Since the beginning of the 21st century Japan has signed one bilateral economic partnership agreement (EPA) after another, starting with the one with Singapore. But the EPA is concluded in accordance with the rules set by the World Trade Organization (WTO). The importance of the WTO, which underpins the international economic order, is unshakable even now.

TOKYO 00003929 003 OF 011

The WTO agreements and the EPAs are likened to "laws" and "contracts" respectively. The WTO (and its predecessor General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), a body pursuing free and indiscriminate trade, has brought economic prosperity to Japan. We must not forget the fact that the dispute settlement mechanism under the WTO has played a major part in dealing with recent trade disputes. It is safe to say that the fate of the Japanese economy hinges on the reliability of the WTO. The Doha round -- the fourth round of major trade talks since the start of GATT -- must be finalized successfully so as to ensure the reliability of the WTO.

The Doha round has taken up the liberalization of agricultural goods and developing countries' industrial products, which had been rarely discussed in the past three rounds of trade talks. The Doha round began in 2001, but it has remained unable to reach agreement on a new formula for liberalization despite the deadline for the agreement set at the end of 2004. Even at present chances are slim that agreement will be reached. Major factors that have made trade talks difficult include agricultural products, which are under strong protectionist pressure, and industrial products. Naturally, the talks have faced difficulties because they have concerned the strongholds of protectionism.

Even so, the talks are advancing at a steady pace toward reaching an accord as evidenced by draft agreements prepared in July by the negotiation chair regarding agricultural and industrial goods respectively. Major points at issue in the negotiations are export subsidies, domestic subsidies for farmers (such as income security), and tariff cuts. The key to a success of the negotiations lies with the United States, which has been strongly calling for tariff cuts on agricultural goods and developing countries' industrial goods. At the initial stage of the negotiations, least developed countries indicated their attitude to resist free trade talks, but at present, the so-called group of four (G-4) -- the US, the European Union (EU), India, and Brazil -- and the so-called group of six (G-6) -- the G-4 plus Japan and Australia -- have taken the lead over the negotiations. The process toward an agreement has been improved now.

What should Japan do at this stage? When will the US, which holds a key to a success of the Doha round, make a move toward completing the negotiations? The situation over the US presidential election in 2008 and moves of the US House and Senate also hold a key. Once there is a sign that the US is moving to complete the Doha round of trade talks, Japan is probably expected to pave the way for each country, particularly developing countries, to be able to act in concert. Japan should do as it did in December 2005. Specifically, Japan assumed a development initiative and removed tariffs imposed on least developing countries' products. This initiative made a significant contribution to the formation of agreement at the WTO meeting in Hong Kong held immediately after this initiative was announced.

The issue that has caught the public's attention in Japan is the issue of tariff cuts on agricultural products. The Japanese government has indicated opposition to cutting tariffs, but the gaps in views between supporters and opponents have been narrowed as the process for completing the trade talks has been progressing. The current stalemate in the negotiations would not be resolved even through the Japanese government turned around its current position, but Japan, premised on broad tariff cuts on agricultural goods at

TOKYO 00003929 004 OF 011

home, must study in earnest the way agricultural administration should be in the future and make preparations for that.

Akira Kotera: Born in 1952; graduated from University of Tokyo's Law Faculty; and after serving as professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University, now serves as professor at University of Tokyo; and also serves as a faculty fellow at the Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI).

(3) Daring prediction - 2007 reversal of power in Upper House (4): Diplomacy, security policy

Tokyo Shimbun (Page 2) (Full)  
August 24, 2007

By Shohei Yoshida

Question: A focal issue at the extraordinary Diet session in the fall is a bill to extend the antiterrorism special measures law, which is required to continue the Self-Defense Force's (SDF) Indian Ocean refueling mission for foreign ships. What are some possible developments?

Answer: There is no doubt that the government and the ruling parties will call on the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) to hold negotiations to revise the bill. However, because it is difficult for them to reach an agreement, the bill is expected to be voted down at the Upper House in the end.

A Turning Point

Q: Why are they not expected to reach the agreement?

A: The SDF is carrying out the refueling mission to support antiterrorism operations in Afghanistan. DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa has been expressing opposition, claiming that the SDF should not be sent to the Indian Ocean because "the United Nations did not approve" the antiterrorism operation.

The DPJ's position is that the SDF should not be dispatched for a mission that is not based on a UN request. Because the SDF dispatch poses a fundamental issue related to the basic principles of the dispatch, neither Ozawa nor the government can reach a compromise.

Q: Even if the Upper House rejects the bill, the bill will be enacted if the ruling parties pass it again at the Lower House by a two-thirds majority.

A: Theoretically speaking, that is true. But many Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers think that doing so will be difficult in reality. They are worried that they might invite a sharp public reaction if they give the impression that they rammed through the bill by exercising numerical strength. Because the LDP suffered such a crushing defeat in the election, they have to be careful.

Q: If the Diet fails to revise the antiterrorism special measures law to extend the refueling mission, the Maritime SDF will have to pull out from the Indian Ocean.

A: Before the Upper House election, it was unimaginable that the SDF will pull out. But it is beginning to seem real. The LDP

TOKYO 00003929 005 OF 011

leadership has indicated that the party "may naturally need to think about a possible case where the law expires," and the LDP may not be just bluffing the opposition bloc by saying this.

Q: Are there any steps to break the situation?

A: Some officials of the government and the ruling parties are indeed seeking the enactment of a new, alternative law that is acceptable to the DPJ. However, given the fact that the antiterrorism special measures law will expire on November 1, that is difficult time wise.

Q: What will be affected if the Maritime SDF pulls out?

A: The United States has repeatedly expressed a concern to Japan that "the absence of the Japanese mission will pose a big problem." If Japan backs out despite the concern, there will be an inevitable impact on Japan-US relations.

Since the 1996 Japan-US joint declaration on the Japan-US security treaty, the bilateral alliance has been strengthened. The integration (of the two countries) was accelerated particularly under the "Koizumi-Bush relationship," and it was thought to be Japan's natural course of action to carry out joint activities with the US military on the Indian Ocean and even in Iraq. Thus, the end of the refueling mission may serve as a turning point.

Discord

Q: Are there any other causes for concern in the Japan-US relationship?

A: There is a possibility of a standstill in the transformation of the US Forces Japan (USFJ), which includes the planned relocation of Futenma Air Station that was agreed upon by the Japanese and US governments. In the recent Diet session, the DPJ opposed a bill on special measures for USFJ transformation. Also, many local governments holding a relocation site are expressing reluctance. Therefore, it will not be possible to promote the transformation plan in a high-handed manner.

Q: The United States was hoping that the Japanese Government will revise its constitutional interpretation on the exercising of the right to collective self-defense, so that Japan will be able to use the missile defense (MD) system to intercept missiles that were fired at the United States. What will become of this issue?

A: The DPJ is not opposed to introducing the MD system. However, it is against revising the constitutional interpretation. The ruling New Komeito as well is becoming increasingly opposed to the revision after the Upper House election. Thus, the prime minister will not be able to respond to the US hope in this field as well.

Q: What will become of the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korean agents? The Abe administration regards it as the top-priority issue.

A: Although the abduction issue is a bilateral issue between Japan and North Korea, Tokyo was hoping for US support to break an impasse. The SDF dispatch to the Indian Ocean or Iraq is not unrelated with Japan's hope for US cooperation in the abduction issue. If the relationship with the United States is strained by

TOKYO 00003929 006 OF 011

the SDF's overseas dispatch issue when Washington's backing is needed for the abduction issue, Japan may run the risk of being up against the wall on all sides.

A Stalemate

Q: Is it even more difficult now to resolve the abduction issue?

A: To begin with, Washington has recently shifted to a dialogue line with North Korea, and US-North Korea negotiations have also started. It is conceivable that the United States will prioritize

the nuclear issue and pay less attention to the abduction issue.

In addition, the Japan-North Korea relationship is in a stalemate in contrast to the US-North Korea relationship. North Korea has regarded Prime Minister Abe as an enemy. Some speculate that Pyongyang will take a wait-and-see stance for the time being concerning the abduction issue, knowing that the Abe administration has become feeble because of the crushing defeat in the Upper House election.

The Japan-North Korea working group of the six-party talks is soon expected to hold a meeting. Under the current environment, however, a drastic breakthrough in the abduction issue is unlikely.

(4) DPJ in action (Part 1): Ozawa determined to bring about change of government in straightforward manner, sealing off option of political realignment plan

ASAHI (Page 4) (Abridged)  
August 24, 2007

"Why does it need party discussion? I thought it has already been settled."

This comment came from Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) President Ichiro Ozawa in a meeting with Financial Committee Chair Kenji Yamaoka at a Tokyo office on the weekend just before the mid-August Bon holiday break. Yamaoka had just suggested opening the party's security research council, which has been dormant, to discuss measures to deal with the question of extending the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which would be a highlight in the extraordinary Diet session in the fall.

The DPJ has opposed the law's extension three times in the past. Ozawa, who believes there is no need to change the party's position, also conveyed his opposition to the extension to US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer on August 8.

But discontent was simmering in the party. Some junior members voiced the need to have a venue for discussion. Feared that if this situation persisted, Ozawa might be again criticized as dictatorial, Yamaoka said to Ozawa: "I think the party will eventually settle on opposing the extension, but some are still not convinced. So we need a venue to persuade them."

Ozawa finally agreed to hold a council meeting, though he had no intention of making compromises. The panel's preparatory meeting took place on August 21. Ozawa, who had just ended his summer vacation, told the meeting: "I did not express my personal view to Mr. Schieffer; I simply explained what the party had decided."

TOKYO 00003929 007 OF 011

Opposing the extension is defined as the first step of the DPJ's basic strategy for pressuring the Abe administration and taking the helm of government in the next general election following Lower House dissolution. At the same time, Ozawa has sealed off his long-cherished political realignment plan.

Two months ago, Ozawa was visited by Hirohisa Fujii, who won a Lower House seat as a result of Hiroyuki Nagahama's decision to run in the July Upper House election. Fujii told Ozawa: "I will not run in the next race. I will do my best until then."

After leaving the Liberal Democratic Party in 1993, Fujii has consistently supported Ozawa who has since launched the Japan Renewal Party, New Frontier Party, Liberal Party, and DPJ. Ozawa aides, including Fujii who reportedly knows what's on Ozawa's mind as if by telepathy, repeatedly made contacts with veteran LDP lawmakers critical of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Before the July Upper House election, Fujii and others put together this scenario: If the LDP suffered a crushing defeat in the election, Abe would resign, and an LDP presidential election would follow. If Taro Aso became Abe's successor, the DPJ would wrest power from the LDP, for example, by voting for Sadakazu Tanigaki in

the Diet tally for the prime minister, in collaboration with the non-mainstream faction in the LDP.

But as the DPJ's landslide victory came in sight toward the end of the election campaign, Fujii and others came to believe that a defeated LDP would not hold a presidential election and that Abe would remain in his post - a prediction that became a reality. Ozawa as a result decided to aim at the reins of government in a straightforward manner, sealing off the option of political realignment.

On July 31, Ozawa made his first public appearance after the election to visit Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) headquarters in Tokyo.

Ozawa, thanking Rengo for its assistance during the campaign, told Rengo General Secretary Nobuaki Koga: "The race has just begun. Please work out the schedule so that I can visit (local districts) in the fall, as I promised. If a general election was held at this point, the LDP would simply lose more seats, so Prime Minister Abe will not dissolve the Lower House so easily."

For the July Upper House election, Ozawa personally hunted for promising candidates and stumped in single-seat constituencies. "My efforts paid off," Ozawa said to himself on July 28.

Armed with the same approach, Ozawa has begun making moves for the next Lower House election. He will begin picking candidates for nearly 100 single-seat constituencies and kick off a stumping tour along with Rengo executives.

On August 6, Ozawa met with Rengo President Tsuyoshi Takagi at DPJ headquarters. Takagi said to Ozawa: "The DPJ must enhance its local chapters. The right to dissolve the Lower House rests with the other side." In response, Ozawa said: "The LDP has yet to determine why it suffered the crushing defeat in the previous race. Its mind is still blank. Parties will present their bills to the Diet in the fall extraordinary session and that will help people determine if any of them deserve the reins of government. The DPJ's ability to replace

TOKYO 00003929 008 OF 011

the LDP will be tested by the public."

Ozawa thinks that although chances are slim for Lower House dissolution before the end of the year, talk of dissolution will gain ground next March or later when Diet deliberation on the FY2008 budget is in the final stage.

(5) Koichi Kato, former LDP secretary general, says Abe's decision to stay in office without public support creates political vacuum

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
August 24, 2007

-- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the House of Councillors election would be an occasion for voters to choose between him and Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) President Ichiro Ozawa.

Kato: He meant in his remarks that the election would give voters the chance to choose the party they feel should hold the reins of government. Therefore, he was saying he should step down from the premiership (should the party suffer a setback). Since the prime minister positioned the election as a midterm test for his administration, he should not have said that his reforms were appreciated.

-- What is your view on the prime minister's announcement of his decision to stay on in office before the results of the Upper House election came out?

Kato: It is not good that he gave the impression that he had decided to remain in office regardless of the outcome of the poll. His staying on in office are neither good for him nor the party.

When Mr. Abe began to come under fire, some party lawmakers called on him to quit. It was difficult to urge him to step down, but

someone has to say it. His decision to remain in office without public support creates a critical political vacuum in effect. The government is not functioning at all now.

-- The prime minister will be shuffling the cabinet on Aug. 27.

Kato: Shuffling the cabinet means that the prime minister did nothing wrong. The party will fall back into silence for the time being, but the issue remains unresolved. As soon as the cabinet is shuffled, party members will express their displeasure.

-- Party members are interested mainly in appointments.

Kato: Not recognizing that the LDP might sink like the Titanic, a number of members are talking about cabinet posts they wish to assume. Their careers are in danger. The ship may go down in two to three months.

-- What if a censure motion against the prime minister is adopted in the Upper House?

Kato: If the prime minister manages the economy well, if he has a flexible foreign policy, and if he enjoys popularity, he will be able to overcome it. Nobody knows what will happen.

-- Do you think the LDP will be able to fight the next Lower House election under the leadership of Prime Minister Abe?

TOKYO 00003929 009 OF 011

Kato: It's impossible. There would be a strong voter backlash, with people feeling that the prime minister had ignored the result of the Upper House race. The number of Lower House seats we will secure may all far below 200 seats.

-- When do you think the Lower House will be dissolved for a general election?

Kato: There will be no immediate suicidal dissolution of the Lower House because cabinet ministers will not go along with such a decision. I think the Lower House will probably be dissolved later this year or after next year's regular Diet session at the latest. Comparing the Lower House to a company, employees usually do not discuss the decisions of their president, but if their company is in a crisis, they will discuss it. We need such now.

(6) Facts about civilian control (Section 4): Thinking of SDF as Japan's new garrison-SDF in transformation (Part 2): Backing to US military called assistance with Iraqi reconstruction

TOKYO (Top play) (Full)  
August 20, 2007

On the morning of March 20 this year, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party held a joint meeting of its defense-related divisions at its headquarters. In the meeting, officials from the government briefed LDP lawmakers. Just as they ended their set of briefings, former LDP Secretary General Koichi Kato's angry voice reverberated: "How long

SIPDIS

are you going to continue? How can you explain that to the people?"

The government was asking for the ruling party's approval of its draft bill revising the Iraq Special Measures Law-short for the Law Concerning Special Measures to Implement Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance and Security Assistance in Iraq. The legislation was intended to extend the Air Self-Defense Force's airlift mission in Iraq for another two years. "We need more time to help with Iraqi reconstruction," Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Kyoji Yanagisawa said. However, he did not account for why the ASDF's Iraq mission should be extended for two years instead of one.

In the joint meeting, there were many government bureaucrats sitting in as briefers. They outnumbered the LDP lawmakers assembled there. There were vacant seats galore. No one but Kato voiced opposition to



the idea of extending the ASDF's Iraq mission. The joint meeting was held with former LDP Secretary General Taku Yamasaki presiding. "There are many people supporting a two-year extension of the law," Yamasaki said in the meeting. "I'm sorry for Mr. Kato," Yamasaki went on. "But," he added, "I'd like you to understand." With this, the LDP gave the go-ahead.

Kato likened the LDP to an "ostrich" that retreats to safe ground. "The LDP has now caved in to the government's evasive logic," Kato said. Yamasaki, however, was aware of the government's strong stance. "The government wants to continue the ASDF's activities in Iraq as a token of the alliance between Japan and the United States," Yamasaki said. "The government would have in a fix if the law was not extended-that's why I gave my consent," he added.

That is the way the government and the ruling party are. They passed the Iraq legislation and sent the Self-Defense Forces to Iraq. The

TOKYO 00003929 010 OF 011

SDF's Iraq mission has undergone a sea change since the Ground Self-Defense Force wound up its humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq and pulled out of that country in July last year.

The government formulated a master plan for Japan's SDF dispatch to Iraq. The masterplan is based on the Iraq Special Measures Law. It expressly stipulates the SDF's activities "centering on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities." According to the master plan, the SDF is to engage in "security assistance activities" to back up US troops "as far as the SDF is not hindered from carrying out its humanitarian and reconstruction activities."

The ASDF, currently working in Iraq, bases its transport planes in Kuwait. The Kuwait-based ASDF transports make four regular flights a week to and from Iraq. The government has not disclosed anything about what the ASDF is airlifting. However, more than 80 PERCENT of the ASDF transports' payloads are US servicemen or US military supplies.

Those US troops are mostly engaged in maintaining public security. The master plan has therefore become a dead letter. On July 10, the government extended the masterplan for another year. However, the ASDF's activities "centering on humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities" remain the same.

"We discussed whether to retouch the master plan," a senior official of the Cabinet Secretariat said. "As a result," this official asserted, "we judged that there was no need to change the master plan because there has been no particular change in the SDF's activities." The problem is that the ASDF's airlifts in Iraq are mostly for the US military there. "Quantity doesn't matter much," the official said. "The ASDF's activities there are based on Japan's policy of high priority," he explained. "That's why," he added. With such a 'so-what' attitude, the official reiterated the same explanations.

The government has kept the master plan intact with no change. Asked why, a senior official of the Defense Ministry cited Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's reply that was given before the Diet on May 14. In that Diet reply, Abe stated as follows: "The Multinational Force's soldiers are also engaged in humanitarian and reconstruction assistance activities." Bearing this Diet reply in mind, the Defense Ministry official raised a question about the idea of revising the master plan. "The government has so far explained the SDF's Iraq mission in its Diet replies," the defense official said. "If the government should change the master plan," he went on, "then I wonder what will happen to all that the government has explained in those Diet replies." In other words, this defense official meant to say that the government cannot modify the master plan in order to retain its coherence with what it has said in the past.

"For the ASDF," Yamasaki recounted, "there's no doubt that their primary task is to back up the US military." He also said: "The ASDF is to airlift personnel and supplies for the United Nations. That is to say, the ASDF is working there in the name of humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. That's the kind of farfetched logic."

Also, the opposition parties have not seriously pursued the government in the Diet." In this way, Yamasaki sighed over the Diet's failure to play the role of civilian control.

The Defense Ministry has no plans to recall the ASDF detachment. One

TOKYO 00003929 011 OF 011

of its senior officials even said: "It's a symbol of the alliance between Japan and the United States. Some people say Japan should not extend its Iraq mission. But we've never thought of that option from the start."

In the beginning, the government had the SDF dispatch plan. Meanwhile, the Diet does not function to check the government. The facts about the SDF's Iraq dispatch-which is intended to back up the United States-have never been made public. SDF activities that have no public support will leave nothing but stress for the dispatched personnel.

MESERVE